

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01144 180828Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EB-08 ISO-00 /019 W
-----180832 091132 /14

R 180730Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1831
INFO USDOC WASHDC
USINT BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL DHAHARAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1144

USDOC FOR DIBA/OIM/SAD: WANDA ALE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP SY
SUBJECT: PROPOSED PENNSYLVANIA IOGA TRADE MISSION

REF: STATE 16332; JIDDA 890; DHAHRAN 175; BAGHDAD 288

1. DATES PROPOSED FOR DAMASCUS SEGMENT (JUNE 17-23) OF PROPOSED MISSION ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THIS EMBASSY. HOWEVER, USINT BAGHDAD'S CABLE (REFTEL) SUGGESTING PENNSYLVANIANS NOT SCHEDULE FORMAL STOP IN BAGHDAD MAY DISRUPT PROPOSED SCHEDULE. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP.

2. MISSION THEME OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WILL FIND INTERESTED AUDIENCE IN SYRIA. SYRIAN REALITIES, HOWEVER, DO NOT QUITE CONFORM TO SITUATION SKETCHED IN PARA THREE OF STATE REFTEL. WHILE IT IS QUITE TRUE THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGING LAND RECLAMATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RESULTS THUS FAR HAVE LAGGED BEHIND EXPECTATIONS. IN FACT, SYRIA IS SUFFERING FROM A PHENOMENON COMMON TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A MASSIVE EXODUS OF POPULATION FROM THE SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO THE CAPITAL AND OTHER LARGE CITIES. THE ACTUAL PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH THE

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DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITIES AND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS (ALTHOUGH SYRIA ENDEAVORS TO MAKE RURAL LIFE MORE ATTRACTIVE) AS IT IS EXPANDING AND MODERNIZING SERVICES IN EXISTING CITIES TO ACCOMMODATE THE UNANTICIPATED FLOOD OF NEWCOMERS.

3. ILLUSTRATING THE SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE THE FOLLOWING RECENT GOVERNMENT TENDERS AND PROJECTS: STUDIES FOR THE

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TOWN OF 150,000 INHABITANTS ON MT. KASSIOUN NEAR DAMASCUS; STUDIES FOR THE NEW TOWN OF DIMAS NEAR DAMASCUS (PREFEASIBILITY STUDIES DOWN BY US FIRM PADCO UNDER USAID FINANCING; FEASIBILITY STUDY CONTRACT SHORTLY TO BE INTERNATIONALLY TENDERED); PLANT TO PRODUCE 2000 PREFACRICATED HOUSING UNITS PER YEAR, IN LATAKIA; MASTER PLAN FOR THE CITY OF HOMS; PREQUALIFICATION FOR STUDY OF SEWAGE PLANTS FOR DAMASCUS AND ALEPPO; WASTE COLLECTION AND REDNERING PLANT (1200 TONS PER YEAR) FOR DAMASCUS.

4. SYRIA HAS A LARGE AND WELL-DEVELOPED CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WITH SOME 5600 REGISTERED ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, MANY OF THEM FOREIGN-TRAINED. THE COUNTRY LACKS SUFFICIENT CONSULTING AND DESIGN ENGINEERS, PLANNERS, AND PROJECT MANAGERS. WE ADVISE PENNSYLVANIANS TO EMPHASIZ THIS SIDE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPECTRUM IN TAMDEN WITH CONTRACTING ENGINEERS, FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT.

5. MOST LARGE SYRIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS REQUIRE FOREIGN FINANCING. AID FROM FRIENDLY STATES AND MULTINATIONAL AGENCIES FILL SOME OF THE GAP, BUT MANY LARGE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTY OF ARRANGING FINANCING. PENNSYLVANIANS WILL NOT MAKE MUCH PROGRESS HERE DISCUSSING LARGE COMMUNITY DEV- ELOPMENT PROJECTS UNLESS THEY ARE PREPARED TO TALK MONEY. FOR THIS REASON, WE ADVISE MISSION TO FOLLOW EXAMPLE OF LAST YEAR'S INDIANA AND MARYLAND IOGAS AND INCLUDE IN THEIR DELEGATION A HIGH OFFICIAL OF A MAJOR PENNSYLVANIA BANK, ESPECIALLY ONE WHICH HAS, OR WISHES TO HAVE, A CORRESPONDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF SYRIA.

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6. SYRIA WOULD WELCOME A HIGH RANKING UNIVERSITY OR STATE POLITICAL OFFICIAL AS LEADER OR MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION, BUT AS WE HAVE INFORMED STATE BIC DIRECTOR ROGERS BY LETTER, SUCH A PERSONAGE IS NOT REQUIRED TO OPEN DOORS IN SYRIA. EXPERIENCED AND WILY TRADERS ALL, THE SYRIANS WANT TO TALK BUSINESS WITH THE AMERICANS WHO CAN DELIVER.

7. EMBASSY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER MICHAEL DAVIS WILL BE MISSION CONTROL OFFICER. WE SUGGEST ADVANCE OFFICER ARRIVE LATE APRIL/EARLY MAY WITH DOCUMENTATION (IN ARABIC, IF POSSIBLE) ON ALL PARTICIPATING FIRMS.

MURPHY

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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